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25 October 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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C O N T E N T S

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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EDT)

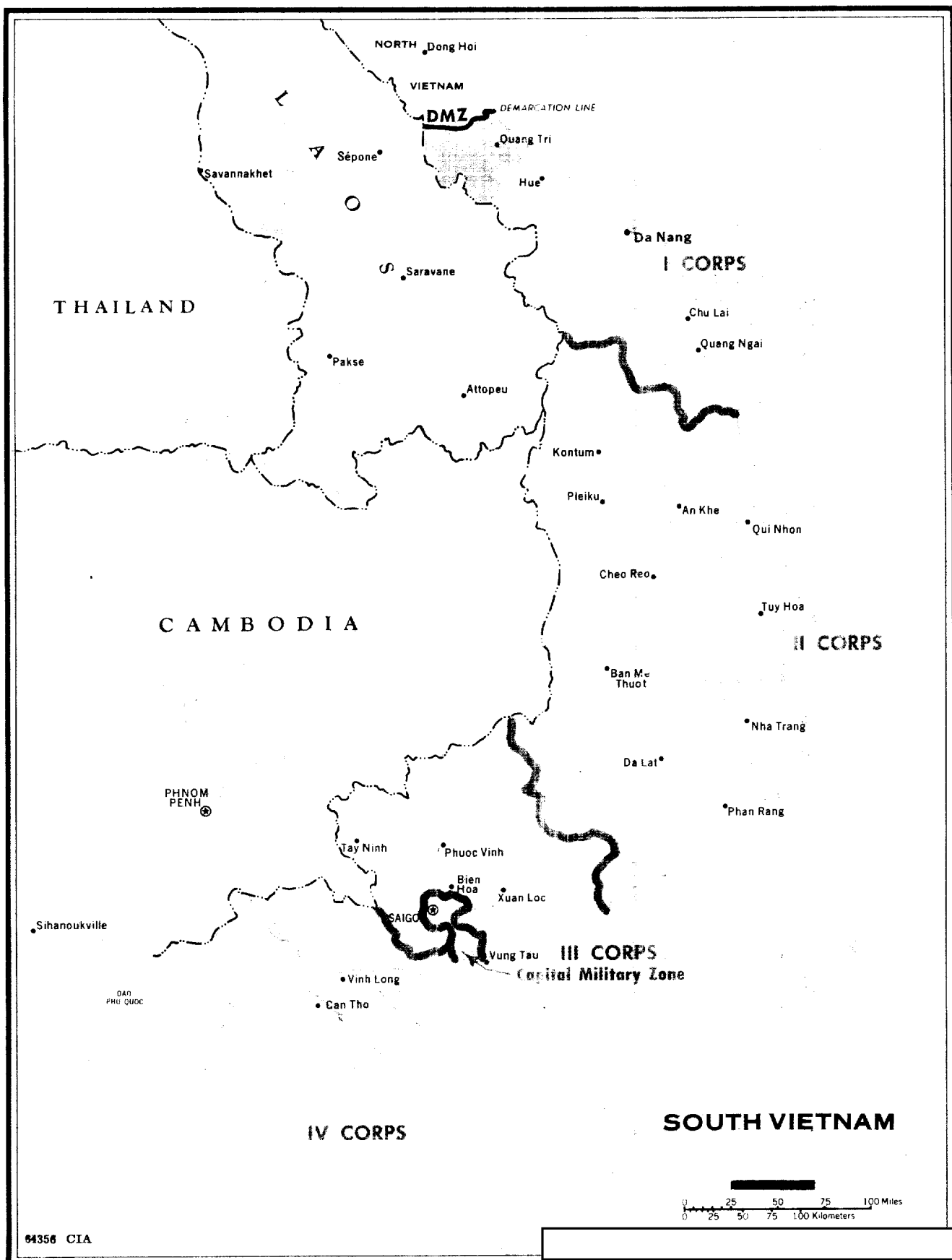
Political Developments in South Vietnam: Rumors of an imminent southern-inspired coup have been dismissed by General Le Nguyen Khang, one of Premier Ky's chief military associates.

Khang, the Saigon area and III Corps commander, reportedly denied yesterday that acting Premier Vien, IV Corps commander Quang, and Defense Minister Co were involved in a plot to overthrow the Ky government during the premier's absence at the Manila conference. Khang's comments on the alleged coup plot suggest that the coup rumors have been deliberately circulated by the pronorthern mayor of Saigon, with the possible concurrence of police director Loan, his brother-in-law.

Meanwhile, the procedural committee work of the constituent assembly has been completed, thus paving the way for the election of officers to some 20 permanent positions in the assembly, perhaps as early as 26 October. All 117 assembly delegates were finally validated by the credentials committee and a final list of rules, consisting of 97 articles, was approved during the 22 October session.

The special national congress of the Unified Buddhist Association was dissolved after two days of disorderly sessions without having made any progress. However, the militant faction reportedly elected one of their leaders as chairman of the Buddhist Institute in a subsequent rump session. The moderate former chairman of the Institute, Tam Chau, has protested the election as illegal, according to a press release. It would thus appear that there is no current prospect for a mending of the militant-moderate schism within the Buddhist leadership.

(continued)



The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Communist forces reportedly launched mortar attacks early yesterday against a US Marine regimental command post near the Demilitarized Zone in northern Quang Tri Province and against elements of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade guarding the defense perimeters of Da Nang air base. US casualties were described as light.

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Panama: A recent antigovernment and anti-US student demonstration could be the prelude to further incidents when Panama celebrates national holidays in November.

On 20 October a small group of flag-carrying students, including some Communist Party members, entered the Canal Zone and marched toward the governor's residence before being stopped by Canal Zone police. The students shouted slogans and threw several "cherry bomb" type firecrackers.

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[redacted] the group, led by a Communist student agitator from the National Institute, had planned to demand that Governor Fleming pose with them for a picture.

President Robles, unlike his predecessor, has acted quickly to quell previous student disorders. The National Guard can be expected to take precautionary measures during the holidays on 3-5 and 28 November, but violent demonstrations could occur. [redacted]

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Brazil: Congressional elections scheduled for 15 November may be canceled if the opposition campaign threatens the government's interests directly.

Despite public Brazilian assurances that the elections will be held, US Ambassador Tuthill believes that whether they take place will depend on the nature of the campaign. The subsequent reopening of the Brazilian Congress--recessed by President Castello Branco on 20 October--will depend on the election results. If the opposition mounts a hard-hitting campaign, decrying as dictatorial the recent ousters and closing of Congress, it would probably increase its gains at the polls--especially in urban areas where the government already is unpopular. The government then might be tempted to take further action against the opposition.

Some members of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB) have said they will intensify their opposition.

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Although President-elect Arthur da Costa e Silva has expressed strong support for the President, the ambassador believes that many of his supporters are far from pleased with events. They fear the government's repressive measures could even result in an opposition victory.

Castello Branco's actions have probably increased his support among the armed forces by demonstrating the lengths to which he will go to guarantee the continuation of the principles of his administration.

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NOTES

Egypt-USSR: The Soviet economic advisory group that arrived in Cairo in mid-September has left without making any new aid offers. The group recommended reforms for the shaky Egyptian economy consistent with but less stringent than those advocated by the International Monetary Fund. Moscow apparently hopes that Cairo will reach a compromise with the IMF.

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